

The Office of Personnel Services and Benefits' Employee Relations Division is here to help Maryland State government's most valuable resource -- **YOU**, the State employee. Staffed with experienced personnel specialists, the Division focuses on resolving employee grievances and disciplinary appeals before such issues are forwarded to the Office of Administrative Hearings for adjudication. The responsibilities of the Division also include mediation services, the Employee Assistance Program, the State Employees' Leave Donation Program and the Leave Bank, and providing technical assistance to State employees concerning personnel issues.

We want you to think of us when you are unable to resolve a workplace problem.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The State of Maryland provides this confidential service to help State employees who face personal matters that adversely affect their lives and/or job performance. Participation in the program is totally **voluntary**. Supervisors are encouraged to officially refer employees to EAP when a performance and/or behavioral problem has been identified. These workers will be scheduled for an initial assessment with an EAP provider. It should be noted that the initial EAP assessment is considered work-time and **no fee** or leave will be charged to the employee. However, if treatment is recommended after this session and the employee agrees to attend, a co-payment is required and the employee must use accrued leave for these visits.

Since the EAP accepts management referrals only, all employees are encouraged to contact their health care provider directly for assistance. Employees may utilize the EAP as a resource to refer them to organizations that offer the appropriate service.

The EAP is an essential part of the State's initiative to eliminate the impact of **Domestic Violence** issues. Therefore, employees experiencing this problem are encouraged to contact the EAP Coordinator for guidance.

Please be assured that job security and promotional opportunities will not be jeopardized by an employee's participation in the EAP. No information will be released without the expressed written consent of the employee.

Mediation

The Employee Relations Division offers confidential mediation assistance to employees and managers who are experiencing conflict with one another in the workplace. Mediation occurs in an informal, relaxed atmosphere. Each party is given the opportunity to effectively communicate his or her thoughts about the issues with the assistance and facilitation of the mediator.

Many employees find that mediation aids in dealing with present and future conflicts in a more effective manner. Participation is voluntary. Employees and managers who are interested in mediation services should contact us at 410-767-4943 or 1-800-411-5123.

Settlement Process

A settlement conference is held in every unresolved grievance and disciplinary action appeal. Our goal is to settle every case so that a hearing is not necessary. The benefits of settling cases include: certainty of outcome, quick resolution of issues, and management/employee participation in reaching mutually satisfactory agreements.

Employees and managers who have questions about this process or general questions about the grievance and disciplinary action appeals process should contact us at 410-767-4943 or 1-800-411-5123.

State Employees' Leave Bank

The State Employees' Leave Donation Program and Leave Bank was established on June 9, 1995.

The State Employees' Leave Bank is not an entitlement, but an employee donation program

that allows employees in the State Personnel Management System, as well as employees in independent personnel systems **who elect to participate**, to receive leave for a serious and prolonged medical condition. Employees who wish to join must donate at least 8 hours of unused annual, personal or sick leave (or a combination of the three) to become eligible members for two years. Donating employees who use sick leave to join the Bank must retain a sick leave balance of at least 240 hours after their donation.

The purpose of the Leave Bank is to provide leave for an eligible State employee who meets all of the following criteria:

- exhausted all accrued leave;
- has a "serious or prolonged medical condition";
- has a meets standards or above PEP evaluation within the last two years;
- has had no disciplinary action within twelve months of the request for leave; and
- has not been on a one-day medical certificate requirement within the last two years of the date of the request.

Employees desiring to become members of the Leave Bank must complete the Bank's MS 407 form during the State's Health Benefits/Leave Bank "**Open Enrollment Period**" beginning October 1st of each year. New enrollees must serve a 90-day waiting period to be eligible to make application for leave from the

Leave Bank. A single donation provides the donating employee a two-year membership. New employees must join within the first sixty days of their entry-on-duty date or they may join during the next open enrollment period.

It is important to know that approval of leave from the Bank is discretionary and that leave may be denied for any reason which is consistently applied and that is not illegal or unconstitutional. Interested employees should contact their personnel representative.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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